

TEMPORARY WORKER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
"Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007"

"The agreement includes temporary workers that will have strong labor protections. This will help people who risk their lives crossing the border for a job will have the chance to apply for good jobs in the United States. And it helps strengthen the backbone of our economy."

Creates a new temporary worker program ("Y Visa Program") to meet U.S. labor needs. Provides 400,000 visas per year for temporary workers coming to the U.S. to meet labor needs. This cap can be adjusted based on market needs to a maximum of 600,000 visas annually.

Ensures that Y visa holders are working while they are in the U.S. Workers are allowed short periods to look for new work (60 consecutive days), and can only be unemployed for 120 days, total, over the duration of the visa.

Encourages Circular Movement. Workers, not accompanied by dependents, can work in the U.S. for 2 years and can be extended for 2 additional two-year periods (6 years total) provided the worker resides 1 year outside the U.S. between each 2 year extension.

Workers who bring their spouse and kids to the U.S. are limited to 2 two-year periods, but the family may only remain during 1 of the two two-year periods. The family must also demonstrate household income that is 150% of the U.S. poverty guidelines and that the cost of medical care is covered by medical insurance.

Reforms the H-2A Program. The bill replaces the bureaucratic, unworkable and uncertain H-2A agricultural program with a streamlined "attestation" process like the one now used for H-1B high-tech workers, speeding up the ability of growers to hire temporary workers when U.S. workers are not available. Strong worker protections, like adverse effect wage rate and the 50% rule, are maintained to protect both U.S. and foreign workers.

Increases H-2B Visas. H-2B visas are now known as Y-2B visas. These seasonal visas have a limit of 100,000 visas annually but can be increased to 200,000 visas annually based on labor market needs.

Increases H-1B Visas. Raises the FY 2008 cap to 115,000 visas annually but can be raised to 180,000 visas annually based on labor market needs.

Protections Against H-1B Fraud and Abuse. Enhances protections for American workers and give the federal government more authority to enforce program requirements.

Medical Services in Underserved Areas. Conrad 30 program is authorized permanently. Previously, the program had to be reauthorized every 2 years. The purpose of the program is to increase the supply of physicians to rural areas that need qualified primary care physicians and specialists in critical areas of medicine such as diabetes, cardiology and orthopedic medicine.